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NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND MILITARY POLICY IN INDEPENDENT UKRAINE

Taras Kuzio

The disintegration of the former USSR in December 1991 led to the appearance of fifteen newly independent states on its territory. The question which most often troubled government circles in the West concerned the inheritance of the large nuclear and armed forces of the former USSR.¹ Who would inherit the strategic and, more importantly, tactical nuclear weapons—both in the former USSR and, potentially, abroad? Who would lay claim to the four fleets and large air force? Would the transfer of conventional weapons to the newly independent states be peaceful, chaotic, or otherwise?

A scholarly comparison of the military policies of the newly independent states has still to be completed. Clearly they were not all the same. The three Baltic republics adopted a "zero-sum" option, claiming nothing of former Soviet assets and demanding an (unrealistic) immediate withdrawal of Soviet/CIS/Russian armed forces from their territories. Moldova, in the midst of ethnic conflict with the Dniester Republic in its eastern regions, moved to establish its own armed forces, but with less vigor than Ukraine, thereby losing much of the equip-

ment previously based in the republic that was promptly removed. In the Dniester Republic, Moldova either failed or proved unable to nationalize the 59th Division which remained as the remnants of the 14th Army and increasingly began to support the separatists. In the Transcaucasus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan forcefully took disorderly possession of former Soviet military hardware which led to armed conflicts, anarchy and destruction. It also led to the establishment of numerous "warlords" with no coordinated military structures beyond the control of central governments, thereby increasing the general state of disorder and civil war in the region.

Elsewhere, in Belarus, Russia and Central Asia, the new ruling elites did not hurry to establish separate military forces and until mid-1992 continued the myth of "CIS armed forces." Since then the Central Asian states have only discussed establishing national guards, Belarus has gone some way towards establishing a military force (at least on paper; loyalty oaths were administered in December 1992, a year later than in Ukraine),² and in

1 See Steven J. Zaloga, "UKRAINE: Armed Forces in Ukraine," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (March 1992) and "Ukraine," *The Military Balance*, 1992-1993 (London: Brassey's for the IISS, 1992), pp. 86-87.

2 The Belarusian head of state stated, "In effect we don't have Belarusian troops in any normal sense, we have a Ministry of Defense, which on 31 December will take the first logical step toward the formation of a Belarusian army—the swearing of the oath." See "Belarusian Leader on First



April-May 1992, President Boris Yeltsin issued decrees establishing a Russian Ministry of Defense. By the second half of 1992, it was not clear what the CIS High Command actually controlled, with even nuclear weapons, except in Ukraine, being placed under Russian jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, Ukraine, due to a number of factors beyond the scope of this paper, many of which for the Ukrainian political elite lay within the realms of the lessons of history,³ moved rapidly and immediately after the Declaration of Independence on 24 August 1991 to establish separate armed forces, national guard,⁴ navy,⁵ border guards and National Security Service.⁶ In contrast to the Baltic republics Ukraine proceeded to nationalize the conventional armed forces on its territories. This proceeded, on the whole, peacefully, without large-scale conflict and in an organized manner. No military clashes have been reported from Ukraine, either between military units or civilian/paramilitary and military forces.⁷ Yet Ukraine inherited three quarters of a million former Soviet troops, many of whom were not Ukrainian.

Ukrainian military policy, although determined and radical, nevertheless rejected ethnic exclusivity, stressed citizenship and the social rights of servicemen and offered a future to officers who in winter 1991 were demoralized and a potential source of discontent. Of course, it was far easier for Russian officers to pledge a loyalty oath to a fellow Slavonic Ukraine, which was less likely in the non-Slavic regions of the former USSR. Clearly, Ukrainian plans for an independent state could have been dangerously thwarted if sections of the large former Soviet forces stationed on its territory had rebelled, going on to possibly create "Dniester Republics" in the Donbas or elsewhere. If this instability had occurred in such a large republic as Ukraine, it would

have had profound reverberations throughout Central Eastern Europe.

By early 1993 Ukraine was the only republic of the former USSR with no foreign (CIS or Russian) troops on its soil. The conventional armed forces had been completely nationalized, officers who had refused to take the loyalty oath had been transferred from the republic, while the air force and strategic nuclear bases were under Ukrainian control. Only the Black Sea Fleet, whose Ukrainian nationalization had been thwarted by former Russian Commander Kasatonov, was divided between Russian and Ukrainian control, pending its final division by 1995.

The developments of Ukrainian military policy from August 1991, with a few exceptions, has largely been an under-reported success. The disputes over possession of nuclear weapons in Ukraine, their dismantling, the demands for security guarantees and compensation, together with Kiev-Moscow-Washington relations point to a less clear-cut Ukrainian military policy that had evolved and adapted to new conditions. Mistakes on all three sides have brought about the present impasse, which has resulted in the danger that Ukraine will remain a nuclear power, at least in the short to medium terms.

Ukraine Moves to Establish Separate Armed Forces

On 24 August 1991, the day Ukraine declared its independence from the former USSR, the Supreme Council of Ukraine adopted a decree that claimed sovereignty over all military units on Ukrainian territory and proposed the formation of a Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, national guard, National Security Service and separate armed forces.⁸ The agree-

3 Year. An Interview with Stanislav Shuskevych," RFE/RL Research Report, vol. 2, no. 3 (15 January 1993).

4 The poor understanding in the West and in Moscow of Ukrainian motives for establishing separate armed forces is evident throughout the period in question. The lack of Ukrainian experts in Western foreign policy establishments until Autumn 1992 produced many misunderstandings which were translated into poor policy judgments. For an early study see Taras Kuzio, "UKRAINE: Ukraine—A New Military Power?" *Jane's Intelligence Review*, (February 1992).

5 The creation of a Ukrainian national guard on the basis of former MVD internal troops is beyond the scope of this article. On this subject see Taras Kuzio, "The Ukrainian National Guard," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (May 1993). The laws, changes and other documents on the National Guard can be found in *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrayiny*, no. 5 (4 February 1992) and *Holos Ukrayiny*, 10 June 1992.

6 The conflict of inheritance of the Black Sea Fleet between Ukraine and Russia is beyond the scope of this paper. See Douglas L. Clarke, "The Saga of the Black Sea Fleet," *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 4 (24 January 1992); "The Battle for the Black Sea Fleet," *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 5 (31 January 1992); Admiral Sir James Eberle, "The Black Sea is Everywhere," *Naval Forces*, no. 4, (1992); and Richard Wolff, "The Black Sea Fleet," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (November 1992). On the Russian-Ukrainian agreement, see Mykola Ryabchuk, "The Art of Compromise," *East European Reporter*, vol. 5, no. 5 (September-October 1992). The agreement is translated by Russian Information Agency-Novosti, no. 160 (3 August 1992).

7 The nationalization of the former Ukrainian KGB and establishment of the National Security Service of Ukraine is also beyond the scope of this article. See Taras Kuzio, "The Security Service of Ukraine—A Transformed Ukrainian KGB?" *Jane's Intelligence Review* (March 1993). In March 1992 the word "national" was dropped from the title of the new organization at the time of the adoption of the new Security Service law.

8 See Taras Kuzio, "Ukrainian Paramilitaries," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, (December 1992).

ment signed by Russia and Ukraine at the end of August, following Russia's border claims made in response to Ukraine's declaration of independence, referred to "a system of collective security," with neither side taking unilateral decisions on military strategy.⁹ Leonid Kravchuk, then chairman of the Supreme Council of Ukraine, was in favor of transferring nuclear rockets to the RSFSR and criticized democratic leaders for their insistence that the weapons remain in the republic where they were to be destroyed.

The Supreme Council of Ukraine's appeal to all military personnel in the republic (3 September 1991) stated that it had acted to ensure a reduction of the military threat to civilian life and that new laws were adopted to prevent the use of the military again in political affairs against the Ukrainian population.¹⁰ The appeal called upon the armed forces to maintain peace and obey their superiors, not to desert from their military units, "and not to allow other premature destabilizing acts." An important consideration was the guarantee of social and legal rights of servicemen, as well as pensions previously accrued, "while not allowing different legal rights to servicemen and members of their families, regardless of their national allegiances, language, religious allegiance and political beliefs." The Ukrainian emphasis upon the equal rights of all servicemen, regardless of nationality, was meant to ensure stability, continuity, good relations with Russia and the utilization of the professional skills of non-Ukrainians.

General Konstantin Morozov was optimistic about the future Ukrainian armed forces because nearly half the officers in the Soviet armed forces was of Ukrainian origin (according to Soviet figures Ukrainian officers accounted for a third of the total number). In an interview conducted in September 1992 in Kiev, General Morozov stated that he had received congratulations on his new post from USSR Minister of Defense Yevgeny Shaposhnikov. According to Morozov, his Soviet counterpart Shaposhnikov had "agreed in principle" that a group of experts should work out bilateral agree-

ments to clear the way for the formation of Ukrainian armed forces. This could include the resubordination of part of the troops under the Ukrainian Minister of Defense. On 8 November 1991, Kravchuk was quoted as saying Ukraine would sign a military accord with Moscow.¹¹ This "mutual understanding" with Moscow, they believed, would prevent a "Yugoslav scenario" from taking place in the USSR.¹²

Lieutenant-General Valery Manilov, chief spokesman of the USSR Ministry of Defense, appeared to contradict, at the very least, President Gorbachev when he maintained that Ukraine could maintain its own armed forces, but could not assume control of military bases or nuclear weapons.¹³ The military correspondent of *Pravda* (29 October 1991) also lambasted the Ukraine's demand for its own armed forces. Later the Kiev branch of the Union of Ukrainian Officers (UUO)¹⁴ criticized Shaposhnikov's order of 8 November to military commanders in Ukraine to take their orders solely from him and that Ukraine has a right only to its own national guard. The UUO claimed this to be "an infringement of the constitutional rights and sovereignty of Ukraine."¹⁵

Ihor Derkach, a member of the parliamentary commission on defense and security affairs, blamed the USSR president and defense minister for "heating up the situation": "They are forever making statements about the need for unified armed forces... This is a typical position of Russian great power chauvinism."¹⁶ Shaposhnikov argued, "I will never submit to the idea to divide people who have sworn to be loyal to the USSR Constitution."¹⁷ In addition, Moscow was troubled by the oath of loyalty introduced during the autumn 1991 conscription drive and that these new recruits were to be stationed exclusively in Ukraine (in accordance with a Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers decree of 30 September 1991).¹⁸

In late November 1991, the presidium of the Supreme Council of Ukraine issued a statement on the question of the armed forces of Ukraine, primar-

8 *Literatura Ukrainska*, 29 August 1991 and *Radianska Ukraina*, 10 September 1991.

9 *Ukrainski Novyny* (Kiev), no. 7 (1991).

10 *Robitnycha Hazeta*, 5 September 1991.

11 *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 November 1991.

12 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 23 October 1991.

13 *Tass*, 24 October 1991.

14 See Taras Kuzio, "Ukraine's Young Turks—the Union of Ukrainian Officers," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (January 1993).

15 *Vechernij Kiev*, 27 November 1991.

16 Radio Kiev, 23 October 1991.

17 Radio Kiev, 22 October 1991.

18 *Za Vilnu Ukrainsku*, 15 November 1991.

ily to counter the edicts of 4 and 14 November from Moscow. These two Soviet edicts had claimed that the Ukrainian position, "would lead to discontent among the general ranks of the armed forces stationed on the territory of Ukraine, and negatively influence their moral and psychological state and combat readiness..." The Ukrainian statement argued that to prevent a destabilization of the situation and a decrease in combat readiness the establishment of Ukrainian armed forces will take place "in accordance with existing socio-political realities, only on a legal basis, in an evolutionary manner..." They would be established by laws, agreements and consultations. The statement reiterated Ukraine's commitment to become nuclear free, not to join any military blocs and to participate in arms negotiations. In conclusion, the statement made a call for peace: "The presidium of the Supreme Council of Ukraine turns to all citizens of Ukraine and servicemen who are serving on its territory with a call to maintain communal peace and quiet."

The Armed Forces on the Eve of the Referendum

On the eve of the referendum, the Defense Minister of Ukraine had appealed to all troops in the republic to vote for independence, promising them guaranteed social and legal rights. "In our decisions and actions Ukraine has already demonstrated that all democratic changes, in this case also the question of defense, are created on the basis of strong legal concepts," Morozov stated.¹⁹ The day before the referendum, the newspaper of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, *Narodnaya Armiya*, published the 24 August 1991 Declaration of Independence on its front page and exhorted its readers to vote "Yes." But on the eve of the referendum Marshal Shaposhnikov sent secret instructions to military commanders to obey only him—and not Morozov. The Commonwealth of Independent States was still attempting to restrict the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to be only allowed a national guard and civil defense units.²⁰

The Minsk agreement to establish the CIS was ratified by the Supreme Council of Ukraine on 10 December 1991, but in its statement the Council claimed it had not infringed upon Ukraine's independent status and that the republic's borders were inviolable.²¹

On the military question, the statement outlined Ukraine's continuing desire to become a nuclear-free state, not to enter military blocs and to create its own armed forces on the basis of former Soviet military forces stationed in the republic. In the Supreme Council of Ukraine, Volodymyr Durdynets, then head of the commission on military and security affairs, stated that two-thirds of Soviet military personnel in Ukraine had, in fact, voted for independence.²²

Newly-elected President Kravchuk declared that the new CIS posed no threat to Ukraine's intention to establish its own armed forces, "while issues, such as nuclear weapons, would be jointly regulated by agreements." Coordination, in Ukrainian eyes, would be mainly in two areas—economic reform and nuclear forces.

On 6 December 1991, the Supreme Council of Ukraine discussed the draft of an oath of loyalty, which would demand the soldier's commitment to serve Ukraine, its constitution and laws; to maintain state and military secrets; and to protect Ukraine's liberty and independence. The oath ends with the words: "I swear to never betray the Ukrainian people." All new draftees would be asked to take this oath. Those who refused would be gradually returned to their republics.²³

On 12 December 1991, one of Kravchuk's first presidential decrees appointed him commander-in-chief of all non-nuclear armed forces in Ukraine, thereby undercutting President Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet Ministry of Defense.²⁴ As one newspaper reported, this was not only the outgrowth of the Minsk agreement, but also reflected the doctrine reached by the Supreme Council of Ukraine during the preceding months.²⁵ Namely, the three former Soviet military districts in Ukraine and the Black Sea Fleet (apart from nuclear weapons) would be the basis for the creation of separate Ukrainian armed forces.²⁶

19 *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*, 28 November 1991.

20 *Radio Kiev*, 29 November 1991.

21 *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*, 21 December 1991.

22 *Radio Kiev*, 6 December 1991.

23 *Molod Ukrayny*, 27 December 1991. See also *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrayny*, no. 5 (4 February 1992).

24 *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*, 14 December 1991.

25 *Vechirnyj Kiev*, 12 and 13 December 1991.

The decree was issued to ensure the defensive capability of Ukraine, combat readiness of troops, discipline and order in the ranks. The commander-in-chief would control all conventional forces from the Kiev, Odessa, and Carpathian military regions as well as the Black Sea Fleet. Ukraine's Minister of Defense would only take orders from the president and would be responsible for the strategy, planning, stationing, property and technology of the armed forces based in Ukraine.

The 30 December 1991 Minsk agreement allowed each member state to establish its own armed forces, which in the case of Ukraine would begin on 3 January 1992. Member states would "jointly with the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, examine and settle, within two months, the issue of the procedure for controlling general purpose forces, taking into account the national legislation of the Commonwealth states and also the issue of the consistent implementation by the Commonwealth states of their right to set up their own armed forces..."

During a press conference on the following day, President Kravchuk announced that the meeting had approved the right of all member states to organize their separate armed forces, although this was initially heavily opposed by the leaders of Russia and Marshal Shaposhnikov.²⁷ Kravchuk also stated that Moscow was attempting to classify all Soviet armed forces in Ukraine (the entire Black Sea Fleet, air force and anti-aircraft units) as "strategic," thereby placing them under the control of the CIS.

At the height of the Kiev-Moscow dispute the democratic Mayor of St. Petersburg, Anatoly Sobchak, stated that "the actions of Ukraine on the question of armed forces and the fleet are a threat to the entire world. On no account can we allow Ukraine to form its own armed forces as it intends... A Ukrainian army is a mine under the future of Russia and the entire world" (8 January 1992).²⁸ It was never explained why this was the case, but it certainly reflected the disquiet brewing over Ukraine's drive for independence, even within the Russian democratic camp.

The reaction in Moscow to Ukrainian military intentions concealed not only deep concern, but

also an element of panic. Lieutenant-General Valery Manilov argued that "cutting up the Soviet armed forces into little pieces could provoke a cataclysm that humanity would hardly be able to survive. I am sure that economic and political considerations will not allow that." A Soviet defense expert was quoted in *The Washington Post* (24 October 1991) to say that military developments in Ukraine showed that "the West's deepest fears appear more and more realistic" and claimed that "the army could be split and could start fighting each other."

President Gorbachev went even further, sounding the alarm with a hollow threat: "This is no joke! Such talk is dangerous. I ask the people to whom these words apply to draw the appropriate conclusions, or measures of a constitutional nature will be taken." Andrey Grachev, Gorbachev's chief spokesman, argued that "the current logic of all Ukrainian behavior can be explained by the election campaign." Sergey Rogov, deputy director of the USA-Canada Institute and a Soviet arms control expert, advised the West to send the following message to Ukraine: "We're not going to support the independence of a republic that as its first step is going to create a 400,000 strong army—you can do it, but without our support."²⁹

On 11 January 1992, Russia and Ukraine signed a joint communiqué on armed forces that stated that forces stationed in Ukraine comprised a grouping of CIS strategic forces, excluding a section of the Black Sea Fleet, which will form part of the Ukrainian armed forces. Another group is "subject to reduction, disbandment or withdrawal by mutual agreement."³⁰

To prevent a repeat of the August coup d'état, servicemen were required to swear the oath of loyalty to Ukraine or be allowed to return to their own republics. Despite claims to the contrary by the Moscow media and High Command, reports continued to be received about units swearing the Ukrainian oath of loyalty, including those stationed outside the republic. Ukrainians in the former Soviet armed forces in Azerbaijan were ready to do so and be transferred to Ukraine,³¹ while military units of Ukrainian nationality at the Simferopol garrison took the oath on 12 January.³²

26 See also the interview with Morozov in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 18 December 1991.

27 *Ukrainski Novyny* (Kiev), no. 25 (1992).

28 *Ukrainski Novyny* (Kiev), no. 26 (1992).

29 *The Washington Post*, 28 October 1991.

30 Tass, 11 January 1992.

31 Radio Mayak, 14 January 1992.

32 Radio Russia, 13 January 1992.

The authorized Ukrainian representative in Russia stated that an air force regiment had originally refused, but after receiving Ukrainian explanations and the texts of the new laws, it also took the oath.³³ By the deadline of 20 January 1992, reportedly 65 to 80 percent of servicemen and middle-ranking officers had taken the military oath of loyalty to Ukraine.³⁴

By early January 1992, 6,400 servicemen had taken the oath, including 200 officers, but 1,800 non-Ukrainians had refused and had been transferred to Russia.³⁵ At the all-Ukrainian military conference in early January the officers present recognized that "unlike their superiors, most of the division and army commanders understood the need for the Ukrainian oath."³⁶ The officers were to take the oath on 18-19 January. Defense Minister Morozov claimed that "several thousand applicants" from cadre officers had requested to be transferred to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.³⁷

But the main problem was housing and social benefits—60,000 families of servicemen were on the waiting list for apartments in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Ministry of Defense had therefore requested that Germany begin donating 40 percent of the funds directly to Ukraine, and not through Moscow, to help build housing for relocated Soviet troops from Central Europe.³⁸ Social discontent among troops was "dangerous," Morozov believed, as it could lead either to disintegration or mutiny. Certainly not everybody agreed that German aid should be utilized to build housing for the military; many thought that this money should be diverted to rebuilding industry and agriculture.³⁹

An added incentive to swear the loyalty oath was the adoption of a new law in late December 1991 by the Supreme Council of Ukraine, which guaranteed social and legal rights to servicemen, provisions that never existed in the former USSR. This served to allay many officers' fears with regard to apartments, pension rights and pay.⁴⁰ These newly-granted rights included the right to participate in

elections, free entry and departure, and freedom of conscience. But servicemen were banned from membership in political parties, to organize strikes, or to take part in commercial activities. In view of the uncertainty that Soviet servicemen had faced during recent years, this new law boosted the morale of servicemen in Ukraine and was undoubtedly helpful in encouraging large numbers of officers to take the loyalty oath.⁴¹

Military Doctrine

The prioritization of building separate Ukrainian armed forces is strongly influenced by the belief that Ukraine lost its independence in 1917-20 because of the new state's refusal to possess an army. After the August 1991 Declaration of Independence, the Ukrainian Parliament had three possible avenues in which to build these armed forces. In the manner of the Baltic republics, Ukraine could start from zero and label the existing forces an "occupation army." Second, Ukrainian forces could be built parallel to existing ones. Both of these variants were rejected as leading to instability and conflict. Instead, Ukraine opted to build its armed forces on the basis of the existing three former Soviet military districts and the Black Sea Fleet.⁴²

As Defense Minister Morozov pointed out, although this path was not the quickest, nevertheless it guaranteed "social peace" and "psychological adjustment" in the ranks.⁴³ Ukrainian military doctrine condemned the use of military force for political and economic purposes—all conflicts were to be resolved by political means. Ukraine strongly supports the maintenance of Europe's post-1945 borders and rejects any territorial claims made against it. Finally, Ukraine does not support the use of force in politics and will refuse to join military blocs. In the words of Valentin Lemish, chairman of the Ukrainian parliamentary commission on defense and security affairs: "The military doctrine of Ukraine will involve the system of the concept of

33 *Izvestiya*, 10 January 1992.

34 The Independent (20 January 1992) quoted a figure of over 80 percent for the Black Sea Fleet, while *The Ukrainian Weekly*'s (12 January 1992) Kiev correspondent reported that 80 percent of all troops in the three Ukrainian military districts had agreed to take the oath; 850 officers had refused and had then been transferred to Russia.

35 Radio Kiev, 8 January 1992.

36 Russian Television, 9 January 1992.

37 *Molod Ukrayny*, 13 December 1991.

38 Central Television, 4 November 1991.

39 *Holos Ukrayny*, 19 July 1991.

40 The text of the law can be found in *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrayny*, no. 15 (April 1992).

41 See the article by Colonel O. Yeromin in *Pogranichnyk Ukrayny*, 4 January 1992.

42 See the article by General-Lieutenant Ivan Bizhan, deputy defense minister, in *Viche*, no. 2 (May 1992), p. 14.

43 *Razbudova Derzhavy*, no. 2 (July 1992).

the prevention of war, establishment of armed forces, preparation of the state and its armed forces to rebuff any aggression. Our military doctrine is defense-oriented, it is aimed at strengthening international security, protection of our state from aggression, defense of territorial integrity, the independence and the constitutional system of Ukraine. It stresses that Ukraine forms its armed forces exclusively for the protection of its security with strict observance of international law, the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.⁴⁴

The development of Ukrainian military policy for the remainder of the century is divided into four stages. In the first stage (1992-93) Ukraine will establish its central governing apparatus, the Ministry of Defense and General Staff, and arrange material and technical support for the armed forces. An important role will be played by a new department in the Ministry of Defense named the Social-Psychological Service, which will Ukrainianize the armed forces and control cadre policy. It is no coincidence that those working in this department are mainly members of the UUO. But as Volodymyr Muliava, head of the department, has stated: "The situation in our army is definitely paradoxical. Servicemen, who should be defending the Ukrainian state, to all intents and purposes do not know its history or the language of the state."⁴⁵

The second stage (1993-94) will include the formulation of a strategic plan for the construction of armed forces, a plan for the preparation of infrastructure and reserves. In the third stage (1995) the armed forces will be fully formed and a system of mobilization will be established with reserves, including fulfillment of international treaties signed by Ukraine. By then the number of Ukrainian armed forces should be reduced from their current level of 700,000 to 450,000. The fourth and final stage (1995-2000) will focus on reducing the number of troops in Ukraine to 250,000, depending on the regional security situation and the reintegration of officers into society.⁴⁶

In early 1992 a number of laws were adopted by the Supreme Council of Ukraine on military affairs: "On General Military Duties and Military Service,"⁴⁷ "On Defense of Ukraine," and "On the Armed Forces of Ukraine." The law regarding Ukraine's defense outlined its purposes as "consisting of political, economic, ecological, military, social and legal measures to safeguard the independence, territorial integrity, protection of the interests of the state and of the peaceful life of the people." The law does not recognize "war as a way of resolving international problems," and states that Ukraine will never be the first to initiate military action and that Ukraine does not have territorial claims against any other state. As with similar documents, great stress is laid on the defense of existing territorial integrity.

The Decree on Military Education has furthered the dismantling of the former Soviet educational system in Ukraine.⁴⁸ The resurrection of the "institute" and "lyceum" draws on many ideas from the pre-Communist era, in particular Ukrainian national and historical concepts.⁴⁹ The reform both humanized the system and brought it closer to the general state educational sector⁵⁰ by introducing the Ukrainian language into military education.⁵¹

The proposed draft of the military doctrine presented by Morozov to the Supreme Council of Ukraine in October 1992 was rejected and harshly criticized.⁵² The main areas of criticism concerned the question of whether Ukraine should continue to profess its readiness to be a nuclear-free state, be neutral and refuse to join blocs (all stated in the July 1990 Declaration of Sovereignty and reaffirmed in the October 1990 Supreme Council of Ukraine statement). Another criticism was that the draft failed to specify which countries represented a "threat" to Ukrainian independence.

The rejection of the doctrine led to a campaign by Communist deputies, 150 of whom later signed a petition to remove Morozov. Although the ostensible reason was the draft of the doctrine, the real reason lay in the Communist deputies' hostility to

⁴⁴ *Narodnaya Armiya*, 11 July 1992.

⁴⁵ *Razbudova Derzhavy*, no. 2 (July 1992).

⁴⁶ *Viche*, no. 2 (May 1992), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁷ *Holos Ukrayiny*, 12 May 1992.

⁴⁸ A list of the newly-reformed military schools is given in *Narodna Armiya*, 15 October 1992.

⁴⁹ *Narodna Armiya*, 13 October, 27 October, 27 November, 12 December, 25 December 1992 and *Vechirnyj Kiev*, 11 March 1993.

⁵⁰ See R. A. Wolf, "Ukrainian Military Education System, 1992-1993" (Camberley: RMA Sandhurst, Soviet Studies Research Centre, November 1992).

⁵¹ *Narodna Armiya*, 20 October 1992.

⁵² Radio Ukraine, 28 October and *Holos Ukrayiny*, 29 October 1992. See also Borys Klymenko, "Ukraine's military doctrine and Black Sea Fleet high on defense minister's agenda," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 1 November 1992.

Morozov's persistent efforts to build Ukrainian armed forces. Democratic deputies, although often critical of Morozov's moderate and often cautious policies, in particular with regard to Ukrainianization of the armed forces, nevertheless opposed the campaign to oust him.

In late 1992 the three military districts inherited by Ukraine were redrawn. There are now two operational commands—western and southern; the Kiev military district has been abolished and units were transferred to the other two regions. A Central Defense Board in Kiev will replace the District Operations Group.⁵³ It is not clear whether this merely reflected existing realities, since the majority of bases and equipment of the former Soviet armed forces inherited by Ukraine were based in the western region. Or whether it was a device to concentrate upon defending western, central and southern Ukraine in the event of an attack from Ukraine's only serious military enemy in the northeast—Russia. Interestingly, in the former Odessa (now Southern) military district, which includes Crimea and southern Bessarabia, both areas of dispute with neighboring powers, a military reorganization in early 1993 aimed to increase the mobility and operational efficiency of troops and their capability to respond quickly to missions.⁵⁴

Nuclear Weapons

In December 1991 there were more nuclear warheads on Ukrainian territory than the combined arsenals of France and the United Kingdom. These 1,300 strategic and 2,605 tactical weapons⁵⁵ included 130 SS-19 Russian-built and 46 SS-24 Ukrainian-built ICBM's, the former with 6 and the latter with 10 warheads each. Ukraine also inherited nearly all the Soviet modern TU-160 Blackjack and 21 TU-95 Bear H-16 strategic bombers. The Bear H-16 bombers could carry up to 16 air launched cruise missiles (ALCM). Although Ukraine inherited the ALCM, various reports have testified to their being made inoperable in early 1992 before Ukraine took possession of them.⁵⁶ Finally, Ukraine

inherited one of the four former Soviet higher military schools to train officers of the strategic rocket forces in Kharkiv.

The disinformation released by Tass⁵⁷ that Ukraine had also "nationalized" the nuclear weapons on its territory in October 1991, was untrue at the time, but was nevertheless repeated with sensationalized headlines by Western newspapers. This led the second deputy head of the Supreme Council of Ukraine, V. Hryniow, to state: "There are no grounds for panic. Of course there will be no separate nuclear weapons."⁵⁸ Hryniow condemned the Tass report as "groundless" and called the "heavily distorted version of the new law" a part of the continued threats from Moscow against Ukrainian independence.⁵⁹ None of the seven military laws had nationalized nuclear weapons in Ukraine, he claimed, adding that Ukraine wanted dual (not sole) control over nuclear weapons in Ukraine (a recurrent demand).

This would entail negotiation with the other nuclear powers: "Ukraine wants to be a nuclear-free zone but understands that this is a long process and can take a long time," stated Andrey Vesolovsky, then Finance Minister of Ukraine.⁶⁰ The former minister of defense, national security and emergency situations, Yevhen Marchuk, reiterated that "there have been suggestions that Ukraine wanted to become a nuclear power. This is not true in any way. Neither the Supreme Council nor the government has ever raised this question. But we must know what exactly is located on Ukrainian territory, work out a program for the (non)use of nuclear forces and also take part in talks on reducing their level."⁶¹

The confusion in the West created by Moscow's deliberate disinformation about nuclear weapons in Ukraine led to a statement by the Supreme Council of Ukraine on 24 October 1991 reaffirming Ukraine's intention of becoming a nuclear-free zone: "Nuclear weapons on Ukrainian territory are under the control of what was the Soviet Union. Ukraine insists on its right to joint control over their use."⁶² Ukraine was ready "to start talks with all

53 *Narodna Armiya*, 3 November and *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 4 November 1992.

54 *Narodna Armiya*, 6 February 1993.

55 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 2 November 1991.

56 See John W. R. Lepingwell, "Beyond START: Ukrainian-Russian Negotiations," RFE/RL Research Report, vol. 2, no. 8 (19 February 1993). This is confirmed in private interviews conducted in Kiev and Moscow by the author in early 1993.

57 Tass, 21 October 1991.

58 *The Guardian*, 24 October 1991.

59 *The Times*, 24 October 1991.

60 *The Guardian*, 24 October 1991.

61 *The Washington Times*, 25 October 1991.

parties regarding the liquidation of the remainder of the nuclear weapons on its territory."

Circles in the West often supported the Russian call for the transfer of Ukrainian nuclear weapons to RSFSR jurisdiction. General Lobov, chief of the Soviet general staff, stated that he believed they should all be transported to Russian territory as the Soviet constitution had no clauses for republican nuclear forces and that a "single defense system" and "united armed forces" should remain in place.⁶³ According to Lobov, "the appearance of new members in the nuclear club will inevitably destabilize the world situation, disrupt agreement on nuclear weapons... and provoke other countries to strive to achieve their own nuclear missile potential." Dual control, according to Soviet defense expert Kokoshin and General Lobov, was therefore "unacceptable."⁶⁴ In the words of the head of the Supreme Council of Ukraine's foreign affairs commission, Dmytro Pavlychko: "In Moscow they say stupid things. We won't go where [the authorities in Moscow] want us to go. There is no union. That nation is in the past."⁶⁵

Pavlychko believed that there were two options with regard to nuclear weapons:⁶⁶ (1) to transfer all nuclear weapons to the control of Russia; (2) to establish an international commission to regulate nuclear weapons in Ukraine. "Then Ukraine," in his opinion, "as a member of the United Nations and a nuclear power would come out with a proposal about the complete elimination of those weapons which are stationed on its territory." Pavlychko continued: "Ukraine does not need any nuclear weapons. It does not want to possess them. The only thing now is how to get rid of them." While Vyacheslav Chornovil, the presidential candidate of the Ukrainian Popular Movement (Rukh), argued: "Our aim to turn our republic into a nuclear-free state will be a good stimulus to a quicker solution to the question of the formation of our own armed forces and also the international recognition of Ukraine..."⁶⁷

Others believed that Ukraine could not achieve complete sovereignty if it maintained nuclear

weapons, because of central control. The architect of this decision to dispose of all nuclear weapons was Professor Volodymyr Vasylchenko, former foreign affairs adviser to the Ukrainian Parliament and currently Ukrainian ambassador to Belgium: "You cannot have a nuclear force which is not tied to the central force, because of technology and control systems. By being a nuclear power we would not have full independence. It was this argument which persuaded the government."⁶⁸

On 6 September 1991, President Yeltsin announced Russia's intention to transfer all nuclear rockets to its territory. A few days later the main democratic presidential candidate, V. Chornovil, vowed to take "all possible measures to prevent the implementation of this act by Russia." Chornovil also declared that although he supported the nuclear-free zone pledge, Ukraine nevertheless was the rightful heir to all of the military hardware on its territory. The presence of nuclear weapons on its territory, Chornovil believed, would ensure Western recognition of Ukrainian independence.⁶⁹ The majority of commentators argued that it was not in the national interests of Ukraine to transfer nuclear weapons to Russia. One of the earliest Ukrainian demands for security guarantees, which went unnoticed in the West, maintained that "in the context of these discussions it is perfectly natural to strive to obtain an effective additional guarantee of security for Ukraine to take the place of nuclear weapons."⁷⁰

After the establishment of the CIS, which placed "strategic" forces in Ukraine under the CIS High Command, Kiev and Moscow clashed over the definition of "strategic" forces. After all, it was in their interests to either minimize or maximize the definition. On 16 January 1992, member states of the CIS agreed that the strategic rocket forces would take an oath of loyalty to the CIS. At the same time, at the insistence of Ukraine, this oath would be balanced (or contradicted?) by the pledge to serve the states where they were based.

The CIS definition of "strategic" forces included the Black Sea Fleet, which did possess at that stage

62 The Washington Post, 25 October 1991.

63 Krasnaya Zvezda, 23 October 1991.

64 Krasnaya Zvezda, 23 October 1991.

65 The Wall Street Journal, 23 October 1991.

66 Radio Kiev, 8 September 1991.

67 Za Vilnu Ukrainu, 11 September 1991.

68 John Lloyd and Chrystia Freeland, "A Painful Birth," Financial Times, 25 February 1992.

69 Robitnycha Hazeta and Molod Ukrayiny, 12 September 1991.

70 See the article by Yury Matseiko (Institute of World Economy and International Relations), "Do We Need Nuclear Weapons?" Literaturna Ukraina, 31 October 1991.

tactical nuclear weapons. In order to undercut Moscow's claim that the Black Sea Fleet was therefore "strategic," Kiev looked favorably upon the early transfer of tactical nuclear weapons from the republic. As this process reached its conclusion in April–May 1992, the conflict over the Black Sea Fleet sharpened, leading to its nationalization by Ukraine, then counter-nationalization by Russia, and, finally, its division (and removal from the CIS High Command) between both states by the Darnomys agreement in June 1992.

The CIS also hoped to place the air force in Ukraine under Moscow's control. The SU-24 bombers were not technically "strategic" but they could carry nuclear weapons and therefore came under the rubric "strategic," according to the CIS Minsk agreement. The Ukrainian loyalty oath was also administered to tank and transport air crews at the air force base at Uzin. Yet technically, their purpose was to support the long-range strategic bombers of the 106th Air Division and, therefore, "strategic" in the eyes of the CIS.

Hostility towards transferring nuclear rockets to Russia gradually increased throughout Ukraine, especially once Russia's territorial claims were publicized. By October 1991, Kravchuk had changed his views and claimed: "One cannot transfer these weapons from one territory to another without upsetting the present existing balance."⁷¹

In March 1992, Defense Minister Morozov reiterated Ukraine's determination to become nuclear-free and not to become a member of any bloc. The halt in delivery of tactical nuclear weapons to Russia for destruction in March 1992 was only "temporary," Kravchuk claimed, until proper international safeguards were instituted.⁷² President Kravchuk stated: "By suspending the withdrawal of weapons, we are trying to establish control over this process. Everybody is well aware of the fact that moving nuclear arsenals from one country to another does not help decrease their number."⁷³ By early May 1992, after initial deliberations in March, all of Ukraine's tactical nuclear weapons had been removed to Russia for destruction.

On 23 May 1992, the presidents of the four nuclear republics signed, subject to ratification by

their republic's parliaments, the START 1 Treaty and Lisbon Protocols as "successor states of the former USSR." They also expressed their intention of acceding to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as soon as possible. This was initially strongly opposed by Russia which continued to demand that Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan adhere to the original Minsk agreement of relinquishing strategic nuclear weapons by 1994—and not 1997 (as provided for in the START 1 Treaty).

In two accompanying letters to President Bush and to NATO foreign ministers, Ukraine continued to insist on its right to control the non-use of nuclear weapons on its territory. (A persistent concern in Kiev has been that a nationalistic Russian government could fire nuclear missiles from Ukraine without Kiev's authorization.) The letter to NATO further insisted that the NATO ministers "take practical steps to create together with Ukraine a system of technical control by the president of Ukraine over the non-use of the strategic weapons based on the territory of Ukraine." The letter to Bush argued that "Ukraine will take into account its national security interests in conducting this activity" (i.e., nuclear disarmament).⁷⁴ The internal Ukrainian debate was not influenced by these documents, which were never published in the Ukrainian press.

In a decree dated 5 April 1992, the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense subordinated all military units on its territory, including strategic rocket forces, the first stage in its establishment of "administrative control" over nuclear bases on its soil.⁷⁵ This included all personnel, financial, logistical and supply facilities. A center to oversee strategic rocket forces in Ukraine was created within the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense. This was followed by the extension of Ukrainian control over long-range aviation, including strategic bombers, and encouraging the strategic rocket forces to take the Ukrainian oath of loyalty, a condition met by the vast majority. Kiev also restricted admission into the strategic rocket forces to Ukrainian citizens during the fall 1992 and spring 1993 conscription drives.

By the end of 1992, most Western analysts concluded that Ukraine possessed "negative control" of nuclear missile bases on its territory, including

71 Radio Kiev, 26 October 1991.

72 *Narodnaya Armiya*, 25 March 1992. This was repeated by foreign minister Zlenko. See *Holos Ukrayny*, 16 April 1992.

73 *Robitnycha Hazeta*, 30 April 1992. In response the Green Party issued a special statement arguing that Ukraine should retain its stated desire to become nuclear free. See *Zelemj Svit*, no. 7 (1992). See also *Zelemj Svit*, no. 15 (1991).

74 For the texts of the Lisbon Protocols and the two letters see *Arms Control Today* (June 1992), pp. 34-36.

75 C. Freeland and J. Lloyd, "Kravchuk Wants Western Surety on Missile Disposal," *Financial Times*, 29 April 1992.

the ability to block the launch of nuclear missiles fired without its authorization. Kravchuk had originally been promised in early 1992 by the CIS High Command a blocking device, but this had never materialized. By December 1992 both Kravchuk and Prime Minister Kuchma claimed that Ukraine had constructed a blocking device, a long-standing demand in Kiev. As early as 9 April of last year, the Supreme Council of Ukraine's resolution "Additional Measures for Ensuring Ukraine's Acquisition of Nonnuclear Status" had argued in favor of Kiev's right "to control the non-use of nuclear weapons stationed on its territory." The Supreme Council of Ukraine had then instructed the Cabinet of Ministers to "ensure operational and technical control by Ukraine over the non-use of nuclear weapons stationed on its territory and ensure that the strategic rocket forces are manned by Ukrainians."

If at the end of last year only the extreme right supported Ukraine's retention of nuclear weapons, the mood had changed as a result of the growing conflict with Russia that followed the disintegration of the USSR. Pavlo Zhovmirenko, a member of parliament and director of the Green World Association, pointed out that "all political forces, including Kravchuk and the majority of parliament, are now of the opinion that nuclear weapons are necessary as a counter-weight to the demands of Russia." Zhovmirenko demanded a "nuclear umbrella" to protect Ukraine from territorial claims made by other states.⁷⁶

Other political parties, such as the Democrats and Republicans, also changed their positions on nuclear weapons, demanding that nuclear disarmament be conducted simultaneously by all four post-Soviet states. Oleksii Malenikov, speaking for the Union of Ukrainian Officers, pointed to unilateral disarmament as a tragic mistake in Ukraine's history that should not be repeated.⁷⁷

According to the Ukrainian parliamentary newspaper, nuclear weapons are "a guarantee of peace and independence of our young state." The declaration of Ukraine's aspiration to become a nuclear-free zone was a "serious strategic mistake," they believed.⁷⁸ Victor Antonov, minister of defense

conversion, stated that Western leaders often privately told him that, "we were stupid to do this, to say we'll give up the weapons and get nothing in return."⁷⁹ In the second half of 1992 many Ukrainian commentators considered the transfer of tactical nuclear weapons to Russia, instead of strategic nuclear weapons, to be a mistake.

By early 1993 public opinion in Ukraine had dramatically shifted from an anti-nuclear position to a qualifiedly pro-nuclear one. Security guarantees and financial compensation were now demanded in return for nuclear disarmament. Only the republic's Greens still remained fully committed to Ukraine's previously declared intentions to become a nuclear-free zone. Boris Oliynyk, recently elected Socialist deputy, former advisor to President Gorbachev and former deputy head of the USSR Supreme Soviet Council of Nationalities, accused some government officials of a "romantic" unilateral nuclear disarmament: "For some reason we have agreed not only to take off our armor, but also our underwear." Nuclear disarmament would reduce Ukraine's stature in international affairs and leave it vulnerable to both Russian and American revanchism.⁸⁰

The change in public opinion⁸¹ and that of the Ukrainian political elite has come about as a consequence of the gradual disillusionment with the West, in particular with the United States. In the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR, all of the former republics, including Ukraine, held ridiculously high expectations of aid from the West. But instead of being rewarded for destroying, in effect, the Soviet empire, the Ukrainian leadership was met by an indifferent and, at times, even hostile United States. Despite promises of Western aid, Ukraine received only medical supplies and grain from the United States.

Only the "stick" was in evidence in the "carrot-and-stick" approach in U.S.-Ukrainian relations over nuclear weapons—the "carrot" remained illusive. While President Bush pursued an all-embracing foreign policy towards Russia, Ukraine was largely forgotten. U.S.-Ukrainian relations remained confined to the sphere of nuclear weapons.

76 Personal interview, May 1992, Kiev.

77 Personal interview, May 1992, Kiev.

78 *Hilos Ukrayny*, 22 February 1992.

79 Natalia A. Feduschak, "Ukraine Seeks To Get Control Of Nuclear Arms," *The Wall Street Journal*, 26 March 1992.

80 *Hilos Ukrayny*, 5 March 1993.

81 On this subject see Taras Kuzio "One-Sided Disarmament?," *Ukraine, The Unfinished Revolution. European Security Studies* 16, (London: Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, 1992), pp. 33-34 and Bohdan Nahaylo, "The Shaping of Ukrainian Attitudes toward Nuclear Arms," *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 8 (19 February 1993).

In the words of Deputy Prime Minister Ihor Yukhnovsky, Ukraine received only "a slap on the back" for transferring its tactical nuclear weapons to Russia last year.

Calls for diplomatic and economic isolation should Ukraine fail to deliver on its commitment to become nuclear free were therefore regarded in Kiev as empty threats; in effect, Ukraine had already been placed under quarantine by the Bush administration. The predominate role of nuclear weapons in U.S.-Ukrainian relations also served to strengthen the position of those in Kiev who had argued that Ukraine would be completely ignored after denuclearization. In the words of Prime Minister Kuchma: "We will be praised for being peace-loving, but no one will help us. Then it will be said that we are a second-rate country and no one will take any notice of us."⁸²

Although President Leonid Kravchuk first raised demands for security guarantees in spring 1992, his calls fell on deaf ears and discussions on this subject began in earnest only in January 1993. Coupled with this has been the apparent Western refusal to appreciate fully Ukrainian security concerns vis-à-vis Russia, in particular repeated territorial claims and the threat of domestic instability caused by the return to power of extreme nationalistic forces. In response to Yeltsin's decree to govern by presidential rule in late March 1993, Pavlychko claimed that Ukraine could no longer join the NPT regime.⁸³

Kravchuk had raised the question of obtaining security guarantees in return for nuclear disarmament in April 1992, on the eve of his visit to the United States. These concerns, however, were never clearly formulated, in particular with regard to the question as to who should play the role of guarantor. This has been compounded by Ukraine's continuing alteration of its definition of security guarantees, which have evolved from covering only nuclear blackmail to a conventional attack and economic blockade. Of these three possibilities, the latter is the most likely policy to be pursued by Russia, yet it is the least likely scenario for which the West would pledge security guarantees.

Ukraine has demanded sums of \$1-2 billion to dismantle nuclear missiles on its territory, but the

U.S. has offered only \$175 million. There are currently no facilities in either Russia or Ukraine to convert weapons-grade plutonium into reactor fuel, although Western studies have concluded that this process is uneconomical. At present, the U.S. is slated to build a storage center for plutonium and uranium in Russia. Ukraine is increasingly likely to be distrustful of Russia storing Ukrainian nuclear materials, fearing that it could then be used for new nuclear missiles by a future authoritarian government. Preventing the removal and storage in Russia of Ukrainian nuclear fuel would be a violation of the NPT regime, assuming that Ukraine does sign it.

If some Ukrainians continue to argue that the SS-19 nuclear missiles should be removed to Russia (as they were built by Russia and therefore could only be serviced and dismantled there), Ukraine would not bear the costs. Therefore, \$175 million would be more than sufficient to cover the dismantling of 46 SS-24 and air launched cruise missiles (again assuming that Ukraine does not intend to remain a nuclear power with weapons built within the republic).

As one author has concluded, "Ukraine's estimate that disarmament may cost up to \$1.5 billion has not, apparently, been backed by any published analysis of the costs."⁸⁴ Russia could threaten to charge Ukraine dismantling, storage and transportation costs which might be as high as the figure offered by the U.S. Finally, one of the main problems in the debate over financial compensation is that Ukraine and the U.S. look at the problem from different perspectives. Ukraine regards the sum as an inducement which would more than cover the costs of nuclear disarmament (i.e., similar to the German payment to Russia for its withdrawal of former Soviet troops), whereas the U.S. looks at the issue purely in terms of the assumed costs which will be incurred.

This misunderstanding is compounded by the question of ownership of nuclear weapons in Ukraine. Ukraine insists that the weapons are its property and that it is de facto a nuclear power, while the U.S. argues that Russia, as the internationally recognized successor state to the USSR, owns the nuclear weapons. The Ukrainian position has progressively hardened as the disputes with Russia

82 Reuters, 16 November 1992.

83 Rupert Cornwall, "Yeltsin's Enemies Count Up the Votes for Impeachment," *The Independent*, 24 March 1993.

84 John W. R. Lepingwell, "Beyond START: Ukrainian-Russian Negotiations," *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 8 (19 February 1993), p.53.

intensify over former Soviet assets abroad, lack of compensation for the tactical nuclear weapons already transferred from Ukraine, and ownership of the Black Sea Fleet. The question of ownership has further angered Russia, which complains that Ukraine refuses to allow Moscow to service the missiles, thereby creating a potentially dangerous environmental disaster.⁸⁵ Although Ukraine claims ownership of the SS-19 nuclear missiles on its territories, it cannot service them.

Meanwhile, the changing public mood at home has made President Kravchuk's job of persuading the Ukrainian Parliament to ratify START 1 and join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) difficult without obtaining security guarantees. Thus far the U.S. and United Kingdom have only offered security assurances, repeating pledges previously made to states who have joined the NPT regime.

In March 1993, the Ukrainian Parliament finally began discussions of the START 1 Treaty, although it is still regarded by Kiev as secondary in importance to a host of other more pressing issues, such as the economic crisis. Deputy Defense Minister General-Colonel Ivan Bizhan argued: "In today's economic situation Ukraine cannot consider the destruction of nuclear weapons its priority task."⁸⁶ Contrary to Western expectations of a speedy ratification of START 1, Dmytro Pavlychko, the moderate chairman of the parliamentary committee on foreign affairs, believes that parliament is divided 50:50 as to its ratification.⁸⁷

The longer this process drags on, the less likely Ukraine will ratify START 1. Even if it does, it will almost certainly include provisos demanding various Western guarantees for Ukrainian independence and territorial integrity. Alternatively, the Ukrainian Parliament could ratify only START 1 (which covers 130 old SS-19 missiles built by Russia), refusing to ratify the Lisbon Protocols or the NPT (thereby leaving it with 46 Ukrainian-built SS-24 missiles and aircraft launched cruise missiles).

Defense Minister Morozov, a moderate who is personally committed to nuclear disarmament, is already under threat from a petition signed by nearly half of the parliamentary deputies demanding his resignation. His possible replacement, Gen-

eral Volodymyr Tolubko, the former commander of strategic rocket forces in Ukraine, favors Ukraine remaining a nuclear power with the 46 SS-24 missiles constructed and based in the republic and Kiev constructing a "Ukrainian nuclear shield."

Conclusions

The nationalization of former Soviet armed forces on Ukrainian territory, the largest number inherited by any non-Russian republic, was undertaken peacefully with no reported violence or military confrontations, which cannot be said about this process throughout most of the former USSR. Of all the former republics, Ukraine has most persistently pursued an independent military policy, which is unlikely to change in the future. By early 1993 Ukraine was the only republic of the former USSR with no foreign troops on its territory, apart from the personnel in the Black Sea Fleet under joint Ukrainian-Russian jurisdiction.

Ukrainian military policy broke both the back of the Soviet armed forces and destroyed the illusion that the CIS, an entity not recognized in internal law, could have its own armed forces. The Ukrainianization of these armed forces is likely to continue at its current slow pace, unless nationalist forces come to power in Russia and/or Ukraine. The major problem areas remain the demobilization of tens of thousands of officers and their incorporation into Ukrainian society, the evolution towards greater professionalism, modern equipment and training. Finally, it is unlikely that the Dagomys-Yalta agreements on the Black Sea Fleet, which are viewed differently by Russia and Ukraine, will solve the problem of the division and control, an issue which, in turn, is connected to possession of the Crimea.⁸⁸

On the question of nuclear weapons, Ukrainian administrative control of the nuclear bases within the republic and the possibility of blocking their unauthorized firing by Russia give Kiev a significant bargaining chip. Many Ukrainian commentators do not talk of remaining a nuclear power indefinitely, but rather of dragging out the disarmament process until Ukrainian independence is securely established, the armed forces are believed to be loyal, and Ukraine is more firmly anchored into

⁸⁵ See "Second Chernobyl Brewing in Ukraine's Missile Silos," *Izvestiya*, 16 February 1993. A reply and the official Ukrainian Ministry of Defense statement appeared in *Izvestiya*, 19 and 25 February 1993.

⁸⁶ *Kyivske vedomosti*, 3 February 1993.

⁸⁷ *Ukrainske Slovo (Paris)*, 24 January 1993.

⁸⁸ See Stephen Foye, "The Ukrainian Armed Forces: Prospects and Problems," *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 26 (26 June 1992).

European structures. The danger, of course, is that a future Ukrainian nationalist government could be tempted to acquire "positive control" of the nuclear weapons on its territory by obtaining the means to re-target and launch them.

If the rapidly changing public mood in Ukraine over nuclear weapons as well as the disillusionment with Western policy are not quickly recognized, Europe may soon find that it has another nuclear member state. The Clinton administration should attempt to avoid the mistakes made by its predecessor and broaden the U.S.-Ukrainian relationship beyond the nuclear question. Finally, it is surely in Western interests that the new U.S. administration balances the "stick" to enforce Ukrainian compliance of its previously declared commitment to become a nuclear-free state with a "carrot." In particular, both sides must learn to understand the other's position. Whereas Ukrainian policymakers do not understand, or even know,

American concerns about nuclear proliferation and do not take into consideration their targeting on the West, American officials have failed to study the domestic influence upon the Ukrainian debate over nuclear weapons. Until American officials come to understand fully Ukrainian security concerns and make their views known about Russian territorial claims they will fail to find a common language that would allow normal negotiations for nuclear disarmament to take place between both sides. It is surely in the national interests of all sides that this takes place sooner rather than later.

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